

ORM Paves Way To Find

Learning how to play chess could help someone balance the wellness wheel, according to the author. [Photo's use is "representative" only.—Ed.]

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No limits exist on how or where operational risk management (ORM) processes can be integrated into Navy sea and shore activities. On board *Kitty Hawk*, we have spent a lot of time integrating ORM into our institutionalized processes (e.g., flight briefs, weapons drills, RAS, and navigation briefs), but we didn't stop there.

We have taken the ORM process and applied it to the individual in an effort to minimize risk and maximize performance. One key concept we keep preaching from the safety pulpit is "treat the cause, not the symptom." You'd be surprised how often we fail to treat the cause while trying to fix potential trouble areas.

Alcohol-related incidents (ARIs) exemplify this point. In this day of increased awareness and sensitivity to activities associated with the drunken Sailor, it's important we implement controls that will work. The chances of a control working are related to how effectively we direct our efforts at the cause of the problem.

When it comes to ARIs, alcohol is not the cause. Alcohol is an accelerator; it exploits

Navy photo by PHAN Dustin Gates

ing Root Cause of ARIs

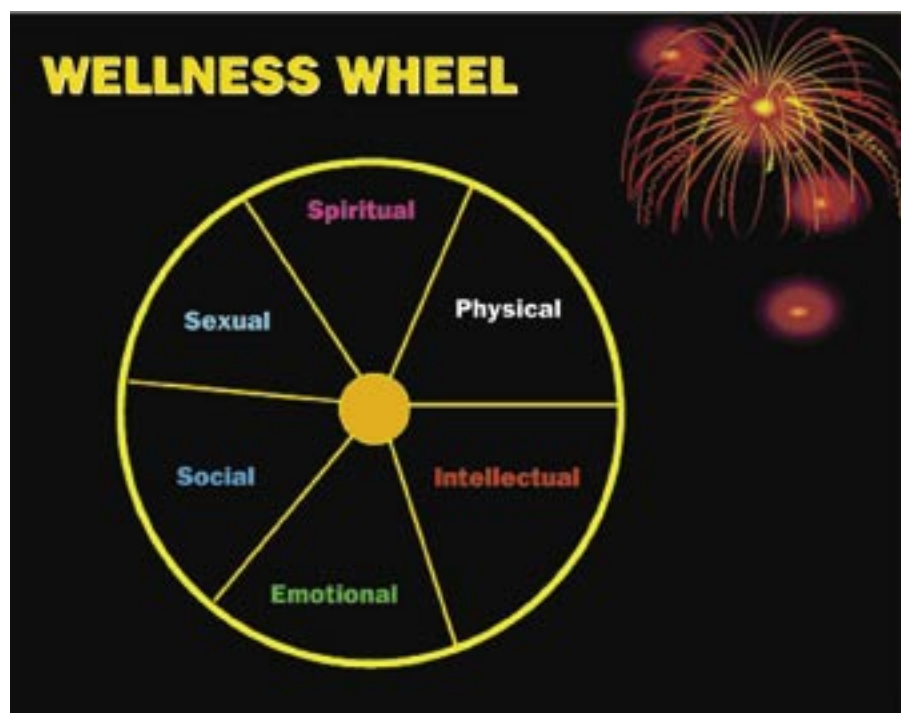
human weaknesses, and it amplifies existing problems, bringing them to the obvious attention of others, but alcohol itself is not **the** problem. And, if we treat it as such, we will not eliminate or even reduce the real problem. Instead, we'll just postpone the magnitude.

When we, as leaders, see someone with potential alcohol-abuse problems, a valuable assessment tool is what I call the wellness wheel. This wheel involves six human areas of development and need: the mind (intellectual and social), body (physical and sexual) and soul (spiritual and emotional). Using a pie chart to graphically depict the wheel concept is valuable visually because it shows that people who are well-balanced, well-rounded and adequately developed function with a wheel that is round. Their round wheels roll smoothly over the surface of life—with less friction and less stress.

When leaders see symptoms of alcohol misuse and abuse in an individual, they need to start out by determining how balanced that person's wellness wheel is. If areas of neglect exist, the best way to treat the cause—and not the symptom—is to focus on the trouble spots.

Perhaps the person is committing very little time to intellectual development and stimulation. Persuading him/her to enroll in a new course of study or to learn how to play chess could help balance the wellness wheel. Your efforts also might help the individual recognize more self-improvement, increased self-esteem, and better time management.

Many alcohol abusers have social deficiencies that play out in life with hours spent in bars, consuming alcohol until they are completely dysfunctional. Mast records reveal that we've had Sailors aboard *Kitty Hawk* with BAC levels as high as 0.38 and 0.40. It's reasonable to assume other Navy units have had simi-



lar incidents. Those medically knowledgeable realize these numbers reflect near-death levels of alcohol in the blood. Sailors in this situation usually end up with non-judicial punishment, temporary restriction, career damage, and alcohol treatment—as a minimum.

Savvy, engaged leadership can get out in front of these problems by accurately assessing their personnel and implementing controls to affect the cause. Remember: Treating alcohol as the problem won't yield success; you have to treat the underlying problem within the individual. 🚫

The author is the ship's safety officer.

Resources:

- http://www.ensuringsolutions.org/solutions/solutions_show.htm?doc_id=339028&cat_id=963 [Ensuring Solutions to Alcohol Problems]
- <http://pubs.niaaa.nih.gov/publications/aa49.htm> [Alcohol Alert], pubs.niaaa.nih.gov/publications/arh23-2/138-143.pdf [Treating Problem Drinking]
- <http://www.npc.navy.mil/CommandSupport/NADAP/> [Navy Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention (NADAP)].